

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY AF/E:LJANOWSKI

APPROVED BY AF:WCHARROP

AF/E:RPOST

AF/I:LSURTLEFF

H:GLANPHER (DRAFT)

HA:RMAXIM

NEA/EGY:KHONAN

S/S-O:JTHYDEN

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O 310350Z MAR 78 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 083005 TOSEC 030122

EXDIS FOR ASST SEC MOOSE ALSO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, UG, US, EG

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM::

PROPOSED AMIN MEETING WITH US AMBASSADOR (EILTS) IN CAIRO

(S/S 7806429)

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AF

1. ISSUE FOR DECISION:

HOW AMBASSADOR EILTS SHOULD REPLY TO AN INVITATION TO
MEET WITH IDI AMIN.

2. ESSENTIAL FACTORS:

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IN CAIRO 8250 (TAB 1), AMBASSADOR EILTS REPORTED
THAT THE UGANDAN AMBASSADOR HAD PROPOSED A MEETING
BETWEEN EILTS AND IDI AMIN, PRESUMABLY DURING AMIN'S
MARCH 3L - APRIL 6 STATE VISIT.

IF IT IS DETERMINED THAT THE UGANDAN AMBASSADOR WAS

ACTING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS, AF BELIEVES THAT AMBASSADOR EILTS SHOULD BE INSTRUCTED TO ACCEPT THE INVITATION UNDER CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS AND PRECONDITIONS. HA STRONGLY

RECOMMENDS AGAINST ACCEPTANCE. IF THE UGANDAN AMBASSADOR WAS NOT ACTING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS, BOTH AF AND HA AGREE THAT AMBASSADOR EILTS SHOULD QUIETLY DISSUADE HIM FROM PURSUING THE MATTER FURTHER.

3. THE OPTIONS:

(1) REFUSE THE INVITATION.

HA STRONGLY RECOMMENDS AGAINST ACCEPTING AMIN'S INVITATION BECAUSE IT WOULD RISK PLACING US IN A NO-WIN SITUATION WITH AMIN AND IN A POTENTIALLY HIGHLY EMBARRASSING SITUATION WITH PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL OPINION HERE:

--AMIN MAY WELL PROPOSE AN EXPANSION OF OUR LIMITED RELATIONS. THERE IS NO REASON FOR US TO CONSENT AND OUR REFUSAL WOULD LIKELY ONLY AGGRAVATE ALREADY STRAINED RELATIONS. NO SURE PREDICTIONS CAN BE MADE AS TO AMIN'S REACTION, INCLUDING THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE MORE THAN 200 AMERICANS RESIDING IN UGANDA.

-- THE PROPOSED MEETING IS NEITHER LIKELY TO REMAIN SECRET

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CONFIDENTIAL -- IN VIEW OF THE MAGNETIC ATTRACTION FOR THE MEDIA OF AMIN'S MOVEMENTS ABROAD -- NOR DO WE HAVE ANY CONTROL OVER HOW AMIN MIGHT DESCRIBE WHAT WAS SAID OR AT WHOSE INITIATIVE THE MEETING TOOK PLACE.

-- WE RISK HAVING TO EXPLAIN TO CONGRESSIONAL AND OTHER DOMESTIC CRITICS WHY WE ACCEPTED A MEETING WITH SUCH A NOTORIOUS FIGURE IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY CHANGE IN THE UGANDAN HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. FURTHER, IF AMIN MISREPRESENTS THE PROPOSED MEETING, WE WOULD BE ON THE DEFENSIVE AND CAUGHT UP IN PUBLIC REBUTTALS OR "CORRECTIONS".

-- THE PROPOSED TIME FRAME FOR THE MEETING IS CLOSE TO THE CHURCH HEARINGS ON UGANDA IN THE SENATE. PROPONENTS OF ECONOMIC AND OTHER SANCTIONS AGAINST UGANDA MIGHT SEE OR EXPLOIT THE MEETING AS UNDERCUTTING DOMESTIC FEELINGS AGAINST UGANDA.

HA PROPOSED THAT WE RESPOND TO AMIN THAT WE DO NOT WISH TO MEET WITH HIM BECAUSE WE SEE NO IMPROVEMENT IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION WHICH IS AT THE CORE OF THE

PRESENT ESTRANGEMENT. WE WOULD SAY THAT WE WOULD BE

WILLING TO RECONSIDER IN LIGHT OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND INFORMATION, SUCH AS THE OUTCOME OF THE PROPOSED STUDY ON UGANDA DECIDED UPON BY THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.

(2) ACCEPT THE INVITATION.

AF BELIEVES THAT AMBASSADOR EILTS SHOULD BE INSTRUCTED TO ACCEPT THE INVITATION WITH CLEAR CAVEATS SINCE:

-- IT IS CONSISTENT WITH POLICY AND PRACTICE. AMIN HAS HAD SUCH MEETINGS WITH OTHER U.S. AMBASSADORS
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(WITHOUT ANY MAJOR PUBLICITY) SINCE THE CLOSURE OF OUR EMBASSY IN KAMPALA IN 1973. WE HAVE TOLD THE CONGRESS THAT WE FAVOR MAINTAINING DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS LINKS WITH UGANDA. A REFUSAL TO MEET WITH A HEAD OF STATE WITH WHOM WE HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IS CONTRARY TO ACCEPTED INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE, AND SUCH A STEP WOULD CONSTITUTE A FURTHER RESTRICTION OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH UGANDA.

-- AGREEING TO MEET WITH AMIN ON NEUTRAL GROUND IS LESS DANGEROUS THAN REFUSING TO MEET WITH HIM. WHEN THE INVITATION WAS EXTENDED TO AMBASSADOR EILTS, THE U.S. WAS PLACED IN A NO-WIN SITUATION. REFUSING TO MEET COULD BE VIEWED BY AMIN AS REJECTION BY THE USG AND SET HIM OFF. WHILE THERE ARE NO GUARANTEES THAT SUCH A MEETING, IF MISHANDLED, WOULD NOT DO THE SAME, AMBASSADOR EILTS IS A TOUGH SEASONED PROFESSIONAL WHO COULD BE EXPECTED TO COMPETENTLY HANDLE THE MEETING.

-- CONGRESSIONAL REACTION WOULD NOT BE SERIOUS IF CONCERNED MEMBERS WERE BRIEFED BEFORE THE MEETING TOOK PLACE OF OUR REASONS FOR ACCEPTING AS WELL AS OUR LIMITED GOALS. GIVEN THE GREATER SCRUTINY EXISTING TODAY WITH RESPECT TO OUR UGANDA POLICY, IT IS LIKELY THAT ANY MEETING WITH AMIN WOULD BECOME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS. AS LONG AS WE ARE IN A POSITION TO STATE THAT THE MEETING WAS AT AMIN'S SPECIFIC REQUEST AND THAT OUR PURPOSES WERE SIMPLY TO HEAR WHAT HE HAD TO SAY AND TO ENCOURAGE UGANDAN COOPERATION WITH THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION WE HAVE A DEFENSIBLE POSITION.

-- AMIN HAS REACTED TO INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE ON HUMAN
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RIGHTS, PRESUMABLY FOR HIS OWN TACTICAL REASONS. COMPETENT INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS, INCLUDING THE AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR IN NAIROBI AND THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN KAMPALA, HAVE REPORTED CALM IN UGANDA FOR THE PAST EIGHT MONTHS AS AMIN CONTINUES HIS "RECONCILIATION" PROGRAM. WHILE WE ARE UNDER NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT AMIN AND THE REASONS FOR THE CHANGE WE BELIEVE IT IS INCORRECT TO STATE THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN UGANDA. WE BELIEVE THE CHANGE HAS PARTIALLY RESULTED FROM U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE. WHILE WE DO NOT BELIEVE PRESSURE SHOULD BE REDUCED, WE DO QUESTION THE RATIONALE OF TAKING THE RISK OF APPEARING TO CHANGE THE RULES OR INCREASING THE PRESSURE WHEN AMIN APPEARS TO BE REACTING POSITIVELY TO EXISTING PRESSURE.

4. RECOMMENDATION:

THAT YOU SIGN THE ATTACHED TELEGRAM (TAB 2) DRAFTED BY AF AND APPROVED BY H AND NEA INSTRUCTING AMBASSADOR EILTS TO REPLY AFFIRMATIVELY DESPITE THE OBJECTIONS OF HA.

APPROVE:

DISAPPROVE:

5. ATTACHMENTS:

TAB 1. CAIRO 8250 (REPEATED TO SECRETARY'S PARTY)

TAB 2. TELEGRAM TO CAIRO (DRAFT FOR YOUR APPROVAL)

QUOTE E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, UG, US, EG

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SUBJECT: UGANDAN AMBASSADOR'S DESIRE ARRANGE MEETING WITH IDI AMI;

REF: CAIRO 8250

∴ YOU SHOULD ASCERTAIN FROM AMBASSADOR BUNYENYEZI

IF HE WAS ACTING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS IN SUGGESTING MEETING WITH AMIN.

2. IF BUNYENYEZI INDICATES THAT HIS APPROACH WAS NOT UNDER INSTRUCTIONS, YOU SHOULD ATTEMPT TO DISSUADE HIM FROM PURSUING MATTER FURTHER AT THIS TIME.

3. IF BUNYENYEZI STATES HE WAS ACTING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS, YOU SHOULD INFORM HIM THAT YOU HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO ACCEPT AN INVITATION TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT AMIN WITH THE FOLLOWING CAVEATS:

-- IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE MEETING IS PRIVATE AND HELD AT THE SPECIFIC REQUEST OF PRESIDENT AMIN.

-- THAT THE USG HAS NO PARTICULAR POINTS IT WISHES TO MAKE WITH PRESIDENT AMIN AT THIS TIME. WE ARE, OF COURSE, PREPARED TO LISTEN TO PRESIDENT AMIN.

4. DEPARTMENT WILL PROVIDE DETAILED BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS IF MEETING IS ARRANGED.

5. IF YOU BELIEVE IT USEFUL, YOU MAY INFORM BUNYENYEZI THAT IF A MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT AMIN AND A US OFFICIAL OCCURRED AND WAS PUBLICIZED, DEPARTMENT BELIEVES US DOMESTIC DEBATE OVER EXISTING US-UGANDAN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP
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RELATIONSHIP WOULD BE HEIGHTENED. IN OUR VIEW, THIS COULD ONLY LEAD TO INCREASED PRESSURES FOR FURTHER RESTRICTION OF THE US-UGANDAN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP.

6. FYI - HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE HELD PUBLIC HEARINGS ON UGANDA IN FEBRUARY AND GENERAL THRUST OF HEARINGS WAS FOR FURTHER RESTRICTION OF US-UGANDAN RELATIONSHIP, INCLUDING IMPOSITION OF TRADE EMBARGO. WHILE THE DEPARTMENT OPPOSES SUCH A STEP, LEGISLATION TO THAT END HAS BEEN SUBMITTED IN BOTH HOUSE AND SENATE. WHILE THE EVENTUAL OUTCOME OF THIS LEGISLATION IS UNCLEAR, IT IS CLEAR THAT FEW MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WOULD BE PREPARED TO OPPOSE ANY LEGISLATION AIMED AT AMIN THAT CAME TO THE FLOOR FOR VOTE. UNQUOTE

7. APPROVED BY: AF/E:RPOST, H:GLANPHER (DRAFT), NEA/EGY:KHONAN, AF/I:LSHURTLEFF; HA:RMAXIM. COOPER

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